

Christianity and Crisis

A Bi-Weekly Journal of Christian Opinion

VOL. XII, No. 3

MARCH 3, 1952 \$2.00 per year; 10 cents per copy

The Role of the Christian Layman

AS these pages go to press, some three hundred fifty lay men and women from the churches of the United States and Canada are assembled at Buffalo in the North American Lay Conference on "The Christian and His Daily Work."

There has been no more striking, and certainly no more heartening, feature of the life of the Protestant Churches in recent years than the rebirth of a responsible interest among their laymen.

The evidences of this "rebirth" are too numerous to be catalogued, too diverse to be adequately set forth in a few paragraphs. Indeed, it is precisely their diversity, both in origin and in character, which is significant.

In North America, one may point to the unprecedented multiplication of new laymen's organizations in many denominations and the revitalization of existing lay organizations in others, to the "Laymen's Movement for a Christian World," to the provision, within the new National Council of Churches, of a strong men's organization to parallel the Council of Church Women. In Great Britain, the most imaginative and influential lead has been given by "The Christian Frontier," a somewhat select group of prominent laymen under the chairmanship of Sir Walter Moberly, which holds occasional conferences, publishes *The Frontier*, and has sponsored an intensive three-year inquiry by medical men and women into the vocation of the Christian doctor, summarized in a notable little book, *The Doctor's Profession*. In Germany, by all odds the most hopeful development of the postwar years has been the Christian lay institutes and training-centers and the annual *Kirchentag* which last July drew over 350,000 Protestants, principally lay, into the Eastern Sector of Berlin during a week of meetings. For Europe as a whole, the "Ecumenical Commission on European Cooperation" claims the active and ardent participation of thirty or forty lay leaders from government, industry, the universities and professions of a dozen countries to consider the most difficult problems of Europe in a Christian context; its work

is achieving growing recognition and influence.

At the world level, the Ecumenical Institute draws to Bossey an almost year-round succession of lay groups for conference and training, principally on the meaning of Christian faith for the several professions. At the Amsterdam Assembly of the World Council of Churches in 1948, one of the most vigorous sections dealt with "The Significance of the Laity in the Church"; it urged the World Council to summon area meetings "to enlist the full lay power of the Church." The first, held in Germany last July, brought together a highly representative body of prominent laymen from all European countries free to send delegates. The North American parallel has just met at Buffalo. The World Council has chosen as a major theme for study, in preparation for its Second Assembly at Evanston in 1954, "The Christian Meaning of Work."

II

It is important to distinguish not one but three distinct, though related, purposes behind this "laymen's revival":

1. *To claim more general, convinced and effective lay support for the churches in their programs.* Doubtless, this was the initial objective of most of the new denominational laymen's organizations. There is nothing novel in that objective. It is not the major purpose of the more significant developments.

2. *To assist laymen in the problems and perplexities which confront them as they seek to live and work as Christians in their several occupations.* It is an obvious, and neglected, fact, as the Amsterdam Report pointed out, that "The laity constitute more than 99 percent of the Church. They spend the greater part of their lives in their homes, their occupations, and the public life of the community. Whether they are doctors, lawyers, industrialists, farmers, steel workers, etc., they live in an increasingly secularized world. They are left to their own wits, which means that they live a life divided into

separate compartments, resulting in frustration and the weakening of spiritual vitality. The Church is for them not their source of strength and light, but a place for the satisfaction of a religious need isolated from the everyday realities of a modern world moulded by the effects of industrialism, technics and standardization. It is through the laity that the Church has the greatest and most natural opportunity to show in and to the world that the message of the Bible, and all that the Church is committed to by obedience to its Lord, are relevant to the real problems and needs of man in every age, and not least in our own." In this perspective, the function of a laymen's movement is not, primarily, to mobilize laymen's resources to uphold the churches in their tasks, but to mobilize the resources of the Church to uphold laymen in their tasks. This is the primary orientation of the Bossey Institutes, the Christian Frontier, and the World Council's area conferences and study program. But there is a further aspect of the layman's Christian vocation, at once broader and deeper; it appears in the third objective.

3. *To encourage laymen to discharge their role as spokesmen for and agents of the Church within the life of society.* Realization of this principle has been slowly seeping into the conviction of Protestant leadership for two decades. It began in the recognition that the churches have no right to *speak* on the issues of the secular order except as their pronounce-

ments are informed and determined by the wisdom and experience of Christian laymen with first-hand knowledge of the problems discussed. It now embraces the correlative recognition that the churches cannot in fact implement their pronouncements, translating the directives of Christian ideals into the stuff of social structure, except through the decisions and deeds of Christian laymen who stand at the points of decision and hold the helms of power. Of the three purposes, the last is climactic and consummatory. In discharging this function, the layman is the church at work in the world.

III

The rebirth of responsible interest among Protestant laymen is one of the most hopeful signs of the times. In its fullest development, it represents something genuinely "new" in Christian history. It is, to be sure, a logical outworking of implications of the Christian view of man and society set forth in the Gospels, and imperfectly glimpsed at the Protestant Reformation in its key principles of the priesthood of all believers and the divine significance of all vocations. But the true role of laymen in the Christian Church has never been fully accepted. These principles still await adequate implementation. That is the larger promise of these recent developments.

H. P. V. D.

The Christian Gospel and the American Way of Life

DAVID E. ROBERTS

EIGHTEEN years ago in Germany I became acquainted with a New Testament scholar who was at the same time a Nazi. As a student fresh from the halls of Union Seminary, I was completely baffled by the mentality of this man. His knowledge of the New Testament was not only technically competent; it was accompanied by religious passion and theological sincerity. Yet I could not fathom how anyone could be so intensely devoted to the Gospel and be a Nazi at the same time.

In my memory he stands as a vivid illustration of the fact that what a man allows the Bible to say to him is profoundly influenced by the situation in which he finds himself. A powerful ideology had taken control of the consciousness of Germany. This man was cut off from other ideas. He could have lost his job and been thrown into a concentration

camp for defending an unpopular point of view. Therefore something more compelling than his own scholarship easily dictated what he was able to think and say. Circumstances had arisen where it was almost impossible for him to allow himself to grasp the real import of the New Testament, because that would have been too dangerous.

Surely the predicament of this German scholar illustrates a principle which goes far beyond his own situation. In a sense, it is always too dangerous for men to grasp the real import of the New Testament—any time, anywhere, in any society. For the Gospel always lays bare elements of tyranny which society regards as necessary for its own security. It lays bare the hollowness of every quest for earthly power, prosperity and triumph. It gives the lie to our feverish boast that we are "only trying to defend

justice." It debunks every human virtue which falls short of the humility of love. In a stubborn, inconvenient way, the New Testament holds out against all ordinary definitions of power, success and righteousness.

Therefore it is a dangerous thing for anyone to try to look at *American* life in the light of the Gospel. To be sure, men do not get thrown into jail here very often just for preaching. But in cynical moments one might suspect that this is partly due to the fact that we preachers have failed to make clear the real nature of the book we have on our hands. The New Testament is a highly subversive document. If taken seriously, it prevents people from giving unqualified devotion to current definitions of the American way of life. And precisely because the pulpit is still so free, even a comparatively timid preacher is without excuse if he tries to conceal this fact.

We can best manifest our loyalty to American traditions of religious and political liberty by exercising the God-given right of looking at ourselves in the light of His Word. Let us pass over, as too familiar, the reflections which come to mind when we tally up the newspaper accounts: dope-addiction among adolescents, bribery of college athletes, the power of organized crime, the corruption of government officials. I agree with those who declare that only long-range remedy for such moral disintegration is a return to faith in God. But I get weary of hearing the declaration repeated because there is so little likelihood of increasing our national understanding of the Gospel by representing it as a sort of emergency supplement to the police force.

Certainly the extent of our moral disintegration is connected with a religious disintegration. But we cannot even come in sight of a radical religious recovery until the churches and the people of this country begin to do penance for the way we have tried to pour the new wine of the Gospel into some peculiarly American bottles.

Many of the proposed alliances between Christian ideals and American ideals that we hear about today are actually a threat to both. For they fit perfectly into the pattern of all fanaticism. The fanatic knows, at some level, that he is living a lie. And because his case cannot bear scrutiny in open debate, he is compelled to ward off the threat of exposure by means of catch-phrases, righteous indignation and sanctions. Indeed, within one set of premises many of our home-grown fanatics are virtually irrefutable, and they possess specialized forms of information and power which can make their total case seem plausible. If you grant that the greatness of our nation is to be judged primarily in terms of its standard of living, its efficiency, its military power, then

everything else follows. So long as moral and religious considerations are left out, their case is consistent and impregnable. Strangely enough, however, most Americans are not crass enough to leave out such considerations—at least when they are speaking in public. That is where the inconsistency enters in; and that is where the defensive rationalization has to begin. The advocates of a case which makes sense in terms of pure power-politics want at the same time to claim that they are following faith in God and preserving the ethical foundations of democracy.

A recent letter in the *New York Times* reads, in part, as follows:

"Our nation was founded and brought to greatness by men who had an unquestioning faith in God. . . . (But) signs of a collapse of conscience in these United States are to be found everywhere. . . . If we are to survive as a great nation we must turn again toward the ideals and the simple faith that made us great. We must reaffirm our faith in the dignity of man and in the rightness of our democratic way of life under God."

So far, so good. But then the writer continues: "I do not propose to offer a solution to the vast problem . . . now confronting . . . our country. But I do suggest that a start in the right direction might be made in our schools and colleges. . . . Today . . . an entirely false concept of academic freedom is turning our colleges into booby traps for young and impressionable minds. Evil and alien influences are brought to bear upon youths who lack the maturity and understanding to discriminate between philosophies, and to winnow the good from the bad. . . . Too often today the American way of life—from a belief in free enterprise to faith in democracy—is belittled by our . . . professors. The time has come to have done with such corroding nonsense."

Precisely because this letter is by no means fanatical in tone, it well illustrates the conjunction of ideas which is so widespread—and so dangerous. The author begins by talking about faith in God, the dignity of man and the rightness of our democratic way of life. But he ends by attacking those methods whereby *alone* young men can learn to discriminate between good and evil philosophies. Undoubtedly he is not aware of any inconsistency. Yet how can faith in the dignity of man be expressed by choking the growth of critical intelligence and independent judgment? How can confidence in the superiority of free-enterprise be expressed by shutting off open debate? Above all, how can religious faith be restored by associating it with national pride instead of with Christian penitence and forgiveness? The letter as a whole makes one feel that the author is a sincere man of high principles. That is part of

the tragedy of our country and our churches today. So many fine people have fallen unconsciously into forms of religious confusion and moral duplicity which are just as bad as those they are trying to fight.

Nevertheless the fact remains that there can be no return to faith in God so long as He is regarded as a sort of confirmatory appendage to the American way of life. Actually we are confronted with a clear-cut choice. *Either* the New Testament is to be supreme, and we are to judge our nation in the light of its standards of righteousness and spiritual greatness. *Or* the so-called American way of life is to be our substitute religion, and the church is to be its mouth-piece. In the latter case, our situation is not unlike that of the Nazi professor, where men hear only those portions of the Gospel which seemingly confirm their national aims and assumptions.

The mentality we have been examining, then, is not really an ally of Christian ideals. Neither is it an ally of the democratic way of life. Those who proclaim their allegiance most loudly are seldom to be found in the fore-front of movements which implement democratic principles in racial and economic relations. On the contrary, they regard such movements as dangerously liberal, and then they lump liberalism with Communism.

In the recent book, *Civil Liberties under Attack*, one of the authors mentions the case of a government official with an impeccable record who was placed under charges because unidentified informants asserted he "advocated the Communist Party line, such as favoring peace and civil liberties," and "his convictions concerning equal rights for all races and classes extend slightly beyond the normal feelings of the average individual." (*Saturday Review of Literature*, Jan. 12, 1952, p. 8.)

Now why do we find this widespread panic, this unconscious dread of genuine democracy, among those who claim to be its guardians? There is no single nor simple explanation. Perhaps our actual situation in the world is precarious enough to drive some people—especially those with extensive possessions to lose—into a defensive form of hysteria and a search for scape-goats. But why the need for scape-goats? Part of the answer is that many of our one-hundred-per-cent-American patterns of life are flatly incompatible with democracy, and we don't want to admit it.

Democracy stands or falls on the attitude toward the person. The question is not merely whether he is free, in a technical sense, to vote, to work, to speak and to worship. The question is also whether he is looked upon as a responsible, spiritual being instead of a cog in a social machine. Who could read the recent article in *Life Magazine* about cor-

poration wives without seeing in it an example of how the genuinely personal gets stifled? Here the suitability of a man's home life, his wife and his children must be judged in terms of how efficiently they function in tooling him up for another day's work. The wife is to engage in "reading and music and that kind of stuff" so that she will seem cultured when she meets her husband's associates. The suburb they choose to live in, the size of their car, and their circle of friends must properly reflect his status; and they must change, with exquisite timing, as he moves up the ladder. The article goes on to say that "roughly half of the companies on which *Fortune* has data, have made wife-screening a regular practice and many others seem about ready to do so. . . . 'Successes here,' says one official, 'are guys who eat and sleep the company. If a man's first interest is his wife and family, more power to him—but we don't want him.' 'We've got quite an equity in the man,' another explains, 'and it's only prudence to protect it by bringing the wife into the picture.'" (*Life Magazine*, Jan. 7, 1952, pp. 32 ff.)

Surely we miss the point if we simply rant against the corporation. The corporation is, willy-nilly, part of a wider pattern. And the wider pattern is nothing less than a creeping, totalitarian religion. It is a religion because it dictates how a person shall find security, self-esteem, standards of value and reasons for living. It is totalitarian because, although one has some mobility within the pattern, one has lost the basic freedom of departing from the pattern itself. All of us are caught in it to some extent; that is why so many of us have to disguise its real character by talking about individualism, free enterprise and democracy; and that is why so many of us have to go looking for scape-goats. We don't dare look at how standardized, collectivized and conformist we are. If we can find a scape-goat, we are spared having to face ourselves.

Yet this substitute religion—which is *the* most potent factor in the lives of many Americans—is not only irreconcilable with Christianity, it is not even a worthy form of humanism. It undercuts all the valid reasons for "reading and music and that sort of stuff." It destroys the basis for real friendship by making uncalculating appreciation of others almost impossible. It forces men who are presumably capable of having respect and affection for their wives and children as persons, to view their loved ones as economic functions.

Significantly enough, the article in *Life* says nothing whatever about the young executive, or the young wife, who might have convictions which run counter to prevailing views on economic and political questions. And I am quite ready to believe that *they no longer exist*. Yet what has happened to the bold

iconoclasm on which the democracy of this country was founded? What has happened to the independent thinking of the individual? In business, in the entertainment field, in journalism, young men will tell you that their exercise of independent judgment and their advocacy of "democracy" must fall within prescribed channels, it must be associated with "safe" political and economic doctrine—or else. Or else they might just as well look for some other sort of work. The same thing is becoming increasingly true in our colleges. Are the churches next on the list?

In the light of all this, we should be profoundly afraid for the welfare of our country. But we should be more angry than afraid, and more resolved than angry. It is not too late to win the battle against a creeping, totalitarian religion which has arisen within the most respectable centers of our national life. We must wage the struggle as strenuously as we fight against Communism and all other external threats to liberty, and for precisely the same reason. What is at stake is not simply the welfare of America, but the hope of the human spirit throughout the world. Thank God there are still plenty of people who really believe that the integrity of personality comes first in a definition of democracy, and that the rightness of our economic and political policies must be judged by this standard.

But if the strength of this ethical conviction is to be restored, it must be based upon a recovery of the core of our religious heritage. That means we must disentangle the Christian Gospel from every attempt to ally it with economic selfishness or national pride. The church can play its part in keeping alive freedom of speech, freedom of conscience and freedom of worship only if it uses them to the hilt. It must care more about truth than about expediency, and it must fear God instead of men. Are we not embarrassed, as Christians, that the armed forces have moved faster than the churches toward solving the problem of racial segregation? We are truly ludicrous when we run behind secular agencies, instead of ahead of them, in the struggle for democracy. If we love our country, if we care deeply about its potentialities for true greatness and service, we must oppose at the political level and by political means those who are ruining it while they stridently claim to be defending it. And at the religious level, if we love the church, we must oppose every movement which tries to interfuse its teachings with hatred, self-righteousness and reaction. Everything precious in Protestantism is threatened wherever liberty itself is threatened. We are thoroughly aware of the enemies outside the gates. But if we are slain, it is just as likely to be by enemies within, who profess allegiance not to Stalin or the Pope, but to "Christian, i.e. American-way-of-life, freedom."

Surely the words of Lincoln are applicable to our situation: "The dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate to the stormy present. The occasion is piled high with difficulty, and we must rise with the occasion. As our case is new, so we must think anew and act anew. . . . [For] we shall nobly save or meanly lose, the last, best hope of earth." (Abraham Lincoln, Annual Message of December, 1862).

Correspondence

On the Vatican Appointment Issue

Dear Sir:

That no comment on "Preserving Our Protestant Heritage" by Dr. Edwin O. Kennedy [November 26, 1951] has appeared in *Christianity and Crisis* is disappointing. For the article must have impressed more than one reader as an unsatisfactory piece of controversial writing. . . .

In a thoughtful argument on a question concerning which intelligent men may differ, Dr. Kennedy, like any other controversialist, is under obligation to define his terms clearly, to omit no point that may properly be regarded as essential, and to keep clearly in mind that he is appealing to the mind rather than to the feelings. Unless a controversialist accepts and fulfills these obligations, his effort may readily damage the cause he hopes to aid.

As an argument against the Vatican appointment, "Preserving Our Protestant Heritage" would be more effective had Dr. Kennedy stuck to the actual issue, which is one of practical politics, and avoided a discussion of the history of the origin of Protestantism, the distinctive marks of Protestants as contrasted with Catholics, and probably a comment on the principle which Americans feel should apply to relations between Church and State. In his comments on these points, he is vulnerable, and his vulnerability prevents a fair consideration of his argument.

Dr. Kennedy's history is on several points inaccurate. . . . Wyclif was not burned at the stake. He died of a paralytic stroke while he was still serving as a priest of the church. He and Huss were not condemned for translating the Bible but for certain theological opinions. John Knox served eighteen months, not eighteen years in the galleys. No record exists of a heretic's being burned at the stake in New England.

Dr. Kennedy's summary of Protestantism as renunciation of clerical authority, a dependence on private opinion as a sure guide, and an acceptance of the Bible as free from any interpretation or sanction by the church is both incomplete historically and inaccurate as a description of present-day conditions.

Protestants read a Bible whose canon was settled by Councils of the Church. Protestants read that Bible with the aid of interpretations given by their pastors or other Biblical scholars of presumed competence. Protestant thinking and Protestant Church policy are largely guided by the clergy. It is true that on all these points Protestant practice differs from Catholic, but the difference is often one of degree. The picture that Dr. Kennedy gives of present-day Protestantism requires clarification. . . .

The omission of any reference to the questions of justification by faith rather than by works and of the place of the church and its sacraments in the life of the individual believer is regrettable. A congregation familiar with Dr. Kennedy might well know his views on these points. A reader is less fortunate and is forced to wonder whether Dr. Kennedy realizes the importance of these issues.

Similarly, a hearer of Dr. Kennedy might well know that in summarizing the American conviction on the relationship of Church and State in the aphorism: "Religion and politics don't mix," Dr. Kennedy did not mean to say one entering politics should leave the teachings of his faith behind. But the words can readily be given that meaning. Furthermore, a hearer of Dr. Kennedy might understand the latter's side as on frequent attempts of Protestant clergy and Protestant Churches to secure and enforce laws against Sabbath-breaking, gambling, drinking, and sexual vice or to guide governmental policy in matters of universal military training, foreign relationships, and other parts of high politics. Dr. Kennedy may condemn or approve such activity. He may even feel that Protestants may legitimately engage in politics to stop vice or to promote world peace, while Catholics err in trying to force acceptance of their views on movies and birth control. But Dr. Kennedy cannot contend that Protestant Churches and Protestant clergy in America today refrain from activities that superficially at least seem the same as those for which he condemns Roman Catholics. As has been said, Dr. Kennedy's argument would make a stronger immediate impression if he stuck to the issue of wisdom of the Vatican appointment and did not enter into a discussion of the wider field of the Church in politics.

Whether the present time is one in which Catholics and Protestants should engage in controversy is a point on which sensible men may differ. But sensible men realize that, if controversy is necessary, those who engage in it should be willing to verify their facts, examine carefully their positions, and make sure that their expression of their views is clear and free from ambiguity. That Dr. Kennedy can meet these requirements may well be

true. He did not meet them in his sermon so mistakenly published.

IOWA CITY, IOWA

M. F. CARPENTER

Dear Sir:

I must express my deep disappointment at the leading editorial of the November 26th issue by Dr. Bennett . . . particularly so, as Dr. Bennett's articles are usually so well written.

The editorial is hesitant on an issue where there should be forthrightness; it is confused and confusing in the irrelevancy of the issue of Communism which it drags into the picture; under the false aegis of "justice, mercy and faith," it seems to counsel inaction in an issue on which we should have a right to expect counsel to action.

Apparently the worst thing about the Vatican controversy, is not the appointment itself, but the fact that some of us—most of us—Protestants have really become aroused about the matter! In fact Dr. Bennett comes out and says just that—"all things considered the President was wrong but less absurdly wrong than the Protestant attacks on him suggest." To make a rejoinder like that, is not simply a reflection on the vast majority of Protestant clergymen who feel the seriousness of this matter, but it reveals a retirement into an artificial isolation of unjustifiable philosophical calm, when the situation calls for aggressive leadership. Dr. Bennett, therefore, puts himself into that class who are really doing the most to aid and abet the vast expansion plans of the church of Rome today—not the open planners to "make America Catholic" by any means whatsoever, but that far more dangerous group of Protestants who apparently refuse to believe what is going on and therefore prefer to discount the whole thing under the false name of tolerance. Let Dr. Bennett come down from the theological Olympus where he lives and mingle with the rest of us and learn what is actually going on. Can it be that he has never heard of College Hill across from Cincinnati, of Dixon, N. M. and North Dakota? These incidents articulate right into this Vatican appointment, and when Mr. Truman proposed to officially recognize the church of Rome he set his seal upon this trend that we so much fear. Why, in God's name, shouldn't *The Christian Century* get excited about the matter—and why should Dr. Bennett refer to it sarcastically when the whole Protestant world is filled with fear and apprehension? It is this utter attitude of detachedness in the article that is so disheartening. He complains that "Protestants seem so much guided by emotion" in this matter. As an older minister, it is my conviction that our fault as Protestants is that, up to the present time, we have been *so little* guided

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by emotion, with the result that when some event of tremendous import like this Vatican appointment comes up, even Dr. Bennett regards the whole matter with an attitude of "Now, children, children, whatever you do, don't get excited." We have a right to expect better leadership of our distinguished Protestant leaders at this time.

THE REV. TRUMAN KILBORNE
BLOOMFIELD, NEW JERSEY

Editor's Note: I recognize more clearly than I did when I wrote the editorial that the issue of the Vatican appointment has been stressed because it is the one issue that can be debated on a national scale that involves the problem of Catholic pressure on American culture. It is not in itself as important as the emphasis upon it suggests but it is a symbol for a great many important issues such as Catholic control of public schools, most of which are local and less tangible. I am sorry that the editorial seemed Olympian to those who must strug-

gle daily with particular forms of Catholic power in their own communities. I still believe that while Protestant emphasis upon the Vatican appointment is understandable, the lack of a sense of proportion in the Protestant reaction does not help the Protestant cause. I, too, am hoping for better Protestant leadership on this very tragic Protestant-Catholic conflict, leadership that will hush up no real issue in the interests of tolerance, but which has a deep understanding of the spiritual as well as the political reasons for Catholic strength, which sees some of the natural and very human causes of Catholic aggressiveness, which presents strongly the Protestant answer to Catholic conceptions of the church's authority, and which seeks to mediate to people the Christian gospel in Protestant terms. The total effect of Protestant talk and agitation in regard to Catholicism at the present time is to suggest primarily Protestant weakness and defensiveness. It is more often anti-Catholic and secular than it is Protestant.—JOHN C. BENNETT.

The World Church: News and Notes

Reports Few Leaving Swedish State Church

London, England (RNS)—Only "a very few" persons have availed themselves of the opportunity afforded by Sweden's new Religious Freedom Act to leave the Swedish State Lutheran Church, Archbishop Yngve Brilioth of Uppsala said here. The law went into effect on January 1.

The Swedish churchman spoke at a meeting sponsored by the Christian Frontier Council, a group of laymen organized in 1942 to promote "an understanding of the meaning of Christian obedience in all areas of social life."

"In my own town of Uppsala," Archbishop Brilioth said, "out of 60,000 inhabitants only 100 left the State Church during the first few weeks of the law's operation."

Archbishop Brilioth said he anticipated that something more than one per cent of members would leave the Lutheran Church. He added that it was "extremely unlikely" that the number would reach five per cent.

Discussing the status of the Swedish Lutheran body as an established Church, Archbishop Brilioth said that although there was a growing impatience with the State's supremacy over the Church, only a minority in parliament would favor disestablishment.

"And this minority," he added, "is decreasing rather than increasing."

Archbishop Brilioth said the general feeling in Sweden was that disestablishment would be a radical and dangerous procedure. He thought it was difficult for people in other countries, particularly America, to realize how difficult it would be to disestablish a Church which had been the established Church for centuries.

160-Year Schism Is Healed As Holland Lutherans Unite

Amsterdam, Holland (NLC)—A schism lasting more than 160 years has been healed with the reunion of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the Restored Evangelical Lutheran Church of Holland.

The merged Church will have a membership of some 70,000 as the Evangelical Church consists of 58 parishes, 49 preachers and 60,000 members, while the Restored Church has seven parishes, four preachers and 10,000 members.

A controversy over rationalism split the Church in 1791. Efforts toward reunion were begun in 1855 and were renewed several times without success. Negotiations culminating in the present union started when representatives of the two Churches joined to approve the theological statements of the 1947 Lund Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation and thus found a common ground for agreement and unity.

Lebanon Religious Leaders Attack Proposed Law

Beirut, Lebanon (RNS)—Christian and Jewish leaders in Lebanon issued a joint manifesto attacking proposed legislation which would limit the authority of religious communities in the country. The legislation has been proposed by the Lawyers' Syndicate of Lebanon.

If enacted, the law would give civil rather than religious courts the right to decide personal status cases involving marriage, divorce, adoption and inheritance, as well as questions concerning religious property and religious disputes.

Christianity and Crisis

A Bi-Weekly Journal of Christian Opinion

537 West 121st St., New York 27, N. Y.

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The religious leaders held a meeting at Bkerke, seat of the Maronite Patriarchate, to draw up their manifesto. Representatives of the Maronite, Greek Orthodox, Syrian Orthodox, Armenian (Catholic and Orthodox), Greek Catholic, Roman Catholic, and Jewish communities were present.

In the manifesto, the religious spokesmen particularly objected to the apparent discrimination against non-Moslem communities in the projected law, which calls for placing only non-Moslems under civil control. For many centuries, religious control of personal status cases has been the rule in Lebanon and other Arab states.

The manifesto threatened demonstrations against the

legislation unless it includes all religious groups in the country. According to official figures, Christians form slightly more than one-half the population of Lebanon, the only Arab state without a Moslem majority.

German Leaders Differ On Vatican Ambassador

Bonn, Germany (RNS)—Chancellor Konrad Adenauer plans to name a Roman Catholic as West Germany's ambassador to the Vatican, according to sources close to the Bonn government.

The same sources said, however, that President Theodor Heuss favors the tradition of naming a Protestant to the post. These sources said it was safe to assume that the Federal President will not approve the Chancellor's candidate should he be a Catholic.

Meanwhile, Bishop Otto Dibelius of Berlin, chairman of the Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKID), repeated his demand that a Protestant be named.

Pointing out that the present German ambassador to Italy is a Catholic, he said that "to see both diplomatic missions in Rome in Catholic hands would create a feeling of discomfort, not to say unrest, among the Evangelical population of Germany."

"The peaceful relationship between the confessions would be solidified by the appointment of an Evangelical ambassador to the Vatican," he added.

Josef Cardinal Frings, Archbishop of Cologne, recently urged that the post be filled by a Catholic.

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